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Review of the resource requirements for the High-Level Intergovernmental Event for Financing for Development and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the note by the Secretary-General, contained in document A/C.5/54/50, on the review of the resource requirements for the High-Level Intergovernmental Event for Financing for Development and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, as requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 104 of section IV of its resolution 54/249 of 23 December 1999. During its consideration of the matter, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information.

2. The Committee notes that, regarding the High-Level Intergovernmental Event, the Secretary-General proposes to revert to this matter, after clarification and outcome of the consultations described in paragraph 2 of A/C.5/54/50, when he will be in a better position to address the resource requirements issue. **The Committee agrees with this proposal.**

3. Regarding the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the Committee notes that the Second Committee, at its 49th meeting, on 14 December 1999, adopted draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.73 by consensus. A statement of programme budget implications, contained in document A/C.2/54/L.74, was before the Committee. The report of the Second Committee to the General Assembly, recommending the adoption of resolution A/C.2/54/L.73, is contained in document A/54/587/Add.6.

4. As indicated in its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/54/7, para. 66) the Advisory Committee reiterates its concern over the continued practice of some intergovernmental bodies of attempting to determine the method of financing of mandates to be approved in the context of substantive resolutions, in contravention of the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987, and recalls the spirit and the letter of section VI of Assembly resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, which reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with the responsibility for administrative and budgetary matters and the role of the Advisory Committee, and expressed concern at the tendency of substantive Committees and

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other intergovernmental bodies to involve themselves in administrative and budgetary matters.

5. The Advisory Committee notes that the Fifth Committee, at its 48th and 50th meetings, on 17 and 23 December 1999, considered the programme budget implications contained in A/C.5/54/43 and decided to inform the General Assembly (see A/54/693) that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.73 contained in the report of the Second Committee (A/54/587/Add.6), additional requirements of $646,400 would arise in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, under section 11A, Trade and development ($616,400) and section 26, Public information ($30,000). These resources would represent a charge against the contingency fund and would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

6. The Advisory Committee notes that the General Assembly, in adopting resolution 54/235 of 23 December 1999, also approved additional resources of $646,400 in the manner mentioned in paragraph 5 above (see A/54/691, para. 14, summary table, section 11A.III. and section 26.III.(b)).

7. The Advisory Committee also notes further that, in paragraph 14 of resolution 54/235, the General Assembly decided to defray the cost of participation of two government representatives from each least developed country in the meetings of the preparatory committee and the conference itself (estimated at $1,164,500 and $500,500, respectively, in A/C.5/54/43) through the use of extrabudgetary resources. In the event that those prove insufficient, it requested the Secretary-General to consider all other options, including the use of unspent balances from the regular budget for the biennium 1996-1997 as an exceptional measure.

8. The Advisory Committee recalls that, in paragraph 7 of its report contained in A/54/7/Add.3, it had recommended that, on an exceptional basis, the special account be maintained and the unspent balance retained until all the activities and programmes outlined in the report of the Secretary-General of 13 May 1998 (A/52/898 and Corr.1) and approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/3 of 12 October 1998 were completed. The Fifth Committee agreed with this recommendation (A/54/691, paras. 45 and 46). Upon inquiry, the Committee was informed that no further expert group meetings had been convened since the issuance of the report of the Secretary-General of 26 October 1999 (A/54/501), and that the actual unspent balance amounted to $587,712, as at 31 December 1999.

9. The Advisory Committee was also informed that no response has been received as yet to the note verbale sent by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to all its States members, inviting them to consider the provision of voluntary contributions to defray the costs mentioned in paragraph 7 above. However, a contribution of two million Finnish marks ($338,764) has been received from the Government of Finland, which has been allocated to supporting the country-level preparatory process for the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries. Given the fact that the preparatory process for the Conference is under way, a major part has already been obligated for those purposes.

10. **The Advisory Committee notes that it is still early to predict the outcome of the appeal. It recommends, therefore, that the Secretary-General further inform the General Assembly in the context of its second resumed fifty-fourth session on the status of voluntary contributions received.** As indicated in the note of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/54/50, para. 8), an amount of $582,000 would be required to defray the costs of the representatives of the least developed countries to the first session of the Preparatory Committee, to be held in July 2000. ***Moreover, the Committee notes and agrees with the proposal that, should there continue to be a shortfall in the availability of extrabudgetary resources for the second preparatory meeting and the Conference itself, the Secretary-General would bring that situation to the attention of the Assembly for appropriate action in the context of its fifty-fifth session.***